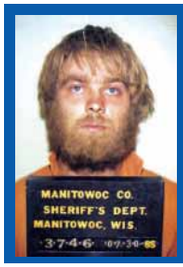
SECRET LIFE OF T.O. ROOFTOPS
metroNEWS



'MAKING A MURDERER'
A guide to the most talked about documentary series around metroLIFE

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Toronto metro

Your essential daily news | THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 2016 | High 2°C/Low -2°C Mostly sunny

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Christmas trees generate roughly 3,700 tonnes of mulch every year
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City pledges safer streets

TORONTO'S DEADLY STREETS

Saving lives trumps driver convenience for Vision Zero

Luke Simcoe
Metro | Toronto

City officials are promising to adopt a policy that focuses on safety over speed when Toronto's road plan is overhauled later this year.

The plan, Coun. Jaye Robinson said Wednesday, will be based on Vision Zero — an international movement aimed at eliminating road deaths.

Vision Zero was pioneered in Sweden in 1997. It's credited with reducing traffic fatalities in the country by nearly 40 per cent, and has since been adopted across the world, including cities like New York, Los Angeles and Chicago.

A key plank of Vision Zero is that roads and traffic systems should be designed to save lives, even if that means inconveniencing drivers.

That may be a tall order for Toronto, where political will remains skewed toward cars. For example, Robinson's comments were followed Wednesday by a lengthy address from Mayor John Tory about relieving traffic congestion.

"We have to balance competing priorities on our roads," Robinson said. "But safety has to be number one."

Pedestrian and cycling advocates have spent years pushing the city to adopt an official Vision Zero policy. Those cries were renewed this week after 2015 closed as the worst year for traffic fatalities in more than a decade. One pedestrian has been killed so far this year and another was taken to hospital with life-threatening injuries after being hit by a truck.

For Walk Toronto's Dylan Reid, a genuine Vision Zero policy would include a "fully funded, systematic strategy" to improve infrastructure and dangerous intersections, as well as public education campaigns "that target drivers specifically" and speed reductions on major roads.

"This will cost money, but costing money is better than costing lives," Reid said.

> **"We can and must do better, especially for our most vulnerable road users.**
> Coun. Jaye Robinson

Robinson was hesitant to say which Vision Zero principles the new road plan will incorporate.

"The strategy in Sweden was to strive to eliminate traffic fatalities and we're going to philosophically take that approach," she said.

She mentioned an expanded bike lane network, street lights near seniors' centres and more red light cameras but shied away from Vision Zero staples like narrower lanes or wholesale speed-limit reductions.

Cars and pedestrians are rarely squeezed for space more than during rush hour downtown. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

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metro NEWS
Your essential daily news

Dolce & Gabbana launches its first line of hijabs and abayas.

Toronto's rooftop gems

If Molson Coors can build a hockey rink on the roof of an Adelaide Street office building, what other surprises tower over Toronto? Here's a look at some treasures found high above the ground.

1 Bees

Chef of the Fairmont Royal York's Epic restaurant, Ryan Gustafson, tends to the bees on the roof of the downtown hotel. The hotel may have hosted Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, but the buzz is all about the 14th floor, which houses hundreds of thousands of bees in hives and temporary nesting spots. Since 2008, honeybee hives have generated an average of 450 pounds of honey a year. And the hotel diversified its hospitality offerings in 2014, opening a bee hotel to house weary pollinator bees seeking a rest during long voyages.

2 Sweat lodge

The Native Child and Family Services has a Sweat Lodge and Sacred Fire area on the roof of their 30 College St. office building. Cities house more than 50 per cent of Canadian indigenous people, but the rooftop sweat lodge at Yonge and College Sts. stands alone. The lodge hosts traditional ceremonies almost every week, including some open to the general public.

3 Running track

The running track atop the Cambridge Club at 100 Richmond St. W. is for exclusive use of members. In the midst of the rat race, runners can take to the track towering above the streets of the financial district. The roof of the 12-storey Sheraton Centre at 100 Richmond St. W. hosts a 160-metre running track.

4 Mini-putt

In classic Google fashion, a rooftop balcony of the tech company's Canadian headquarters at 111 Richmond St. W. boasts a five-hole mini-putt course. Each hole incorporates Toronto landmarks in the design, including the Dufferin St. arch, the Prince's Gate, and Noel Harding's Elevated Wetlands (the "teeth" sculptures by the DVP). Visitors can access the course year-round.

6 Ford Model T track

Built for the Ford Motor Company of Canada in 1914, the roof of 672 Dupont St. was once a place to burn rubber in Model Ts. Each floor of the building was designed specifically for housing, assembling and showcasing the cars.

5 Garden

Garden co-ordinator Spencer Quinn readies a soil bed for planting garlic bulbs at Ryerson's rooftop garden at the George Vari Engineering and Computing Center. Ryerson University student group Rye's Homegrown operates eight edible gardens.

STORY: TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE; PHOTOS: TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE/CONTRIBUTED

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Artists to perform Live from City Hall

MUSIC

New series will feature talent from a variety of genres

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

It's shaping up to be a lively year at city hall — in a very nontraditional way.

Today marks the official launch of Live from City Hall, which will bring local musicians to the building's rotunda for performances every other week.

The series aims to showcase a variety of artists and is part of the city's commitment to create more opportunities for growth in the music industry. The commitment also includes developing an official music strategy, which is still in the works.

Among those on today's lineup is The Yong Novelists, an indie roots band fresh off a European tour that took them through The Netherlands and Switzerland. The group was named new/emerging artist of the year at the 2015 Canadian Folk Music Awards.

Amie Therrien, the band's manager, expects the new effort at city hall will make people fee more connected to local musicians. The program gives people a "cohesive" way to enjoy multiple genres in the same places, she said.

"It's really great for musicians to feel they've got the support and the voice at city hall," she added. "This is a program that's open to everyone, that's inclusive."

Thursday's launch also includes a performance from The Muso Project, a band known for cranking out jazz, funk, R&B and soul hits in Toronto since 2008.

The lineups for future shows includes artists like Lions Den Studio producer and soul-blues-funk singer Bobby Dreadfull, The Fugitive Minds band, Luke Nicholson, Maddy Rodriguez and Melanie Ungar.

Graydon James, left, and Laura Spink comprise The Young Novelists. They're performing at city hall as part of a new music series. COURTESY JEN SQUIRES

GET INVOLVED

- Details about applying to be part of Live from City hall are posted on the city's website, toronto.ca.
- The shows start at 5 p.m.

JAIL GUARDS

Province prepares for possible strike

Guards at the Central East Correctional Centre in Lindsay refused to serve meals to hundreds of inmates Wednesday, amid heightened tensions as the province braces for a possible strike by Ontario's correctional officers this weekend.

About 800 inmates in the jail were forced to go without breakfast and weren't fed by guards until around 1 p.m. — several hours past the usual 7 a.m. time.

The refusals follow on the heels of 70 guards at the jail who booked off work Tuesday citing illnesses — the majority of the roster of correctional officers scheduled to work in the institution that day.

The information was confirmed by Chris Butsch, a correctional officer at the jail, and president of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) local representing the jail's guards.

Butsch said the refusal to provide meals to the prisoners at the usual times was sparked by the guards' fears about potential missing items from the institution's kitchen.

Ontario jail guards have been without a contract since December 2014. They have rejected a contract offer with no wage increase in the first year, a lump sum for 2016 and a pay hike of 1.4 per cent in 2017, and are pushing for solutions to overcrowding and understaffing in jails, and on being declared an "essential service."

Butsch insists the dispute in Lindsay has "nothing to do" with the larger fight between the guards and the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Meanwhile, the provincial head of the union representing Ontario's guards says civil service managers being recruited to staff jails in the event of a strike by guards this weekend are ill-equipped for the dangerous challenges they will face.

With the government moving furniture and provisions into provincial jails, Ontario Public Service Employees Union president Smokey Thomas said Wednesday that security and safety in jails is at risk.

Guards will be in a strike position at 12:01 a.m. Sunday, but contract talks will resume Friday with a mediator in bid to avert a strike or lockout.

> **The ministry may be forced to resort to lockdowns.**
> Smokey Thomas

"Without experienced and properly trained staff, the ministry may be forced to resort to lockdowns, which in turn greatly increase tensions and the risk of violence," Thomas wrote in a letter to Treasury Board President Deb Matthews. "These individuals manage IT workers, policy analysts and correspondence writers. They are in no way qualified to supervise the shrewd and violent criminals incarcerated in Ontario's jails."

"As part of our contingency planning, managers from across the Ontario Public Service have been trained to perform work that is typically done by those who may be on strike," said Annie Donolo, a spokeswoman for Matthews. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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REVENUE

Reinstate vehicle tax: Groups

Mayor John Tory and council can start delivering on a 20-year plan to reduce poverty in Toronto by reinstating the vehicle registration tax, says a coalition of social justice organizations and a research institute.

"Just as it was eliminated, it could be reintroduced, and it could be easily reintroduced in this budget," said Sheila Block, a senior economist with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

By reviving the $60-per-car charge, said Block, councillors can "be true to their word" while "improving the lives of low income people in this city and really improve all of our lives by reducing inequality."

The tax — which council killed in 2011 under the Ford administration — could raise $66 million this year and be implemented relatively quickly, she told a news conference at city hall where councillors were discussing the proposed 2016 budget.

Council makes final decisions next month.

Representatives of Social Planning Toronto, Women's Habitat of Etobicoke and Voices from the Street joined Block to call on the city to revisit previously studied revenue generating tools.

Updating previous calculations, they include taxes on entertainment (which could raise $18 million, according to Block), tobacco ($30 million), alcohol ($77 million), road tolls ($78 million) and a tax on private, non-residential parking spots ($174 million.)

Councillor Norm Kelly, on council when it passed the vehicle registration tax, remembers the "firestorm" candidates encountered along the election campaign trail.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

TRAFFIC

Toronto is employing technology and crunching data in Phase 2 of the mayor's fight to get traffic moving, including the identification of 10 "hot spots" where volume, poor engineering or signals slow car movements to a crawl.

Toronto's 10 hot-spot intersections:

Yonge-Finch
Yonge-Sheppard
Finch-Victoria Park
Black Creek-Lawrence
Eglinton-Martin Grove
Mt. Pleasant-St. Clair
O'Connor-Don Mills
Bloor-Parliament
Eastern-Carlaw

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12927412

Tenants 'suffering since Day 1'

SHOPS AT AURA

Lawsuit filed over alleged embellishment by developer

Optician Alfred Wong says he was misled into thinking he was making a smart investment when he bought a retail condo unit in the underground mall of the 80-storey Aura building, just north of Yonge and Gerrard.

A brochure for buyers boasted future access to the PATH, which links 1,200 stores, 50 buildings and Union Station. But there is still no PATH connection, and Wong says his business is suffering.

"I keep losing money every day, actually," said Wong, who paid about $356,000 for his condo in 2013. "There is no traffic at all going through our floor. It makes business very difficult for all the owners. Most of us have been suffering since Day 1."

In a $31.6-million lawsuit, the condo corporation claims the developer, Canderel Residential, and College Park Residences IV misrepresented the mall as "a first-class retail shopping centre" with "a future connection to the PATH."

The condo corporation is suing Canderel and The Residences of College Park IV for negligent misrepresentation, breach of contract and construction deficiencies, among other allegations, none of which have been proven in court.

In an email, a spokesman for The Residences of College Park IV said, "It would not be appropriate for us to respond to these allegations — no matter how baseless they may be — through the media, as this matter is now before the courts."

In the brochure, pictures show shoppers strolling the mall's corridors with shopping bags in hand. In reality, "for sale" and "for lease" signs abound in the windows of empty storefronts. There are only three restaurants in a food court built for 12, according to the mall's floor plan. More than half of the 122 retail units are unoccupied.

"Is the Shops at Aura Toronto's worst mall?" ran a BlogTO headline in November.

Jonathan Tolentino runs Improshare at the Shops at Aura in the basement of the Aura condo building at Yonge and Gerrard. LUCAS OLENIUK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

"It looks like a ghost town," said lawyer Denise Lash in an interview. Her firm, Lash Condo Law, is representing the condo corporation in the lawsuit.

Like many others in the Aura mall, Jonathan Tolentino, 26, co-owner of the custom T-shirt and apparel company Improshare, says he was banking on the link to the PATH. He and his family bought their retail condo unit for $435,000 in 2013 intending to rent it but opened their own store after months of looking for a tenant without success.

"There hasn't been any significant foot traffic down here. Ever," he said.

Coun. Kristyn Wong-Tam, whose ward includes the Aura mall, says she feels for the owners. Canderel has installed "knock-out panels" on the south side of the building to connect to the PATH in the event of nearby development, she said.

> **"I'm going to bet there are people within a stone's throw ... that don't even know it exists.**
> Jim Danahy, CEO of retail advisory firm CustomerLAB

"But right now, there is no potential to connect anything because there's no development," she said.

A proposed redevelopment of the Chelsea Hotel is an opportunity to tunnel from Aura south toward the closest point on the PATH, the Atrium on Bay on Edward Street, said Al Rezoski, a manager at the City of Toronto who was the planner and manager assigned to the Aura tower.

But any connection is "10 years off, and that's optimistic," he said. It would also require the permission of a number of businesses between Elm and Edward streets.

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COURTS

City loses rent-notice suit

The City of Toronto was negligent toward Parkdale rooming-house tenants by failing to notify them of rent reductions after their landlords' property taxes were slashed, an Ontario Superior Court judge has ruled.

"It was a breach of the standard of care for the city to not give any notice at all," Justice Paul Perell wrote in a 17-page ruling in the class-action case.

Unless the city's legal department appeals, the decision brings to an end a seven-year legal saga that began after the city, between 2004 and 2008, reduced the property taxes on 33 Parkdale rooming houses between 25 to 70 per cent after the properties were reclassified.

The city was required to notify both tenants and landlords of the latter's obligation to pass a portion of the savings on to the tenants. It didn't, however, and an estimated 200 to 500 tenants overpaid their rent.

Terence Williams is the lead plaintiff in the class action against the city for failing to let tenants know about a rent reduction in their rooming houses. LUCAS OLENIUK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

> **"The energy that's been put into resisting this case has been ... a clear injustice, as far as I can see.**
> Brendan van Niejenhuis

"It's inexplicable in this case, of all cases, the city simply didn't send these notices," said Brendan van Niejenhuis, the lawyer representing plaintiff Terence Williams.

The average claim owing to individual class members is likely about $3,000 "based on educated assumptions about rents in rooming houses at the time," he said.

The city's combined liability could be as much as $500,000, he said. The city is currently reviewing the Jan. 4 decision, a spokeswoman said.

Williams, 65, a community support worker in Parkdale, said he expects he might collect up to $500.

"The tenants ... were low-income people or on social assistance, (who) could use the money for their personal needs," he said Wednesday.

Perell, in a 2011 ruling, wrote he was reminded of the Greek myth of Tantalus, who was punished for his misdeeds by eternal confinement below a fruit tree beside a pool of fresh water.

"If Tantalus reached for fruit to eat, the tree branches would raise beyond his grasp, and if he stooped for water to drink, the water would recede. Mr. Williams, who does not deserve any punishment, has been tantalized by the defendant."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

It could be tough getting a copy of this week's special edition of Charlie Hebdo. Generally only 20 copies reach Toronto.
GETTY IMAGES

School marks Hebdo attack

EDUCATION

Students will attend event on press freedom, democracy

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

For one Toronto high school, Thursday isn't just about remembering last year's terrorist attack on Charlie Hebdo.

It is about remembering there are ongoing issues with press freedom all over the world, said Robert Beaudin, principal of Le Collège français.

"What happened in France was very horrible," he said. "It was an attack on news and free speech."

The downtown Toronto school is hosting a special event on press freedom in light of what happened a year ago at the French satirical magazine.

Two gunmen broke into the publication's office and killed a dozen people, including eight staff members. The event triggered an outpouring of sympathy for France and the paper itself, turning Charlie Hebdo into a symbol for press freedom.

Le Collège français has always provided lectures on press freedom for students in grades 11 and 12, but the subject has become even more prominent since the attack, Beaudin said.

"We have a special connection because our school is French but we talk about press freedom issues from other countries, too," he said.

French Consul General Marc Trouyet, speaking at the school event, said the attack was a reminder that freedom of speech "is not a given."

"Those who attack our press freedom want to divide us. It is a global threat to multicultural democracies," he said.

Toronto has offered an "overwhelming" amount of sympathy to France, he said. What's important is to make sure threats of violence don't hold back growth, he said.

"The students, like everyone else, have to know that these liberties are the pillars of our democratic societies."

Waterfront raises

The board in charge of Waterfront Toronto quietly voted 6-1 to a pay increase for three executives, in time for the New Year.

Chief financial officer Chad McCleave, vice-president of development Meg Davis and vice-president of planning and design Christopher Glaisek would see bumps of up to 11.6 per cent. Those three made between $232,000 and $248,000 last year with $14,000 to $15,500 in taxable benefits.

Deputy Mayor Denzil Minnan-Wong — the only member to vote against increases — said the board needs to improve accountability.

Questioned about the increases Wednesday, Mayor John Tory said he's against a pay increase as the city looks to balance its own budget.

"I have suggested they might want to reconsider it," Tory told reporters. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

COURT

Muzzo to plead guilty in fatal collision

Marco Muzzo will return to court on Feb. 4 to plead guilty to charges related to a collision that killed three children and their grandfather, his lawyer Brian Greenspan told a Superior Court judge Wednesday.

Greenspan said an agreed statement of facts will be presented on Feb. 4, when Muzzo will make a statement to the court. The sentencing hearing is scheduled to take place on Feb. 23 and 24.

Speaking to the media outside the court, Greenspan stressed: "This is not a plea deal. This is an acceptance of responsibility by Marco Muzzo."

Jennifer Neville-Lake, the mother and daughter of the deceased, said she and her husband have been "utterly decimated by this."

Neville-Lake wasn't expecting to hear an intent to plead guilty from Muzzo, and is "cautiously optimistic" that the family will hear a guilty plea — the day before her son Daniel would have turned 10 years old.

Edward Lake and Jennifer Neville-Lake. THE CANADIAN PRESS

"It's not going to bring our family back or fix us, we're going to remain broken," Neville-Lake said, regarding a guilty plea for Muzzo. "We can never repair but maybe we can learn to carry our broken hearts.

She hopes the looming end of court proceedings will allow her family to move beyond their "Groundhog Day".

The couple was surprised to hear Muzzo's lawyer had mentioned their children by name. Neville-Lake said they had previously been mentioned only indirectly by the defence. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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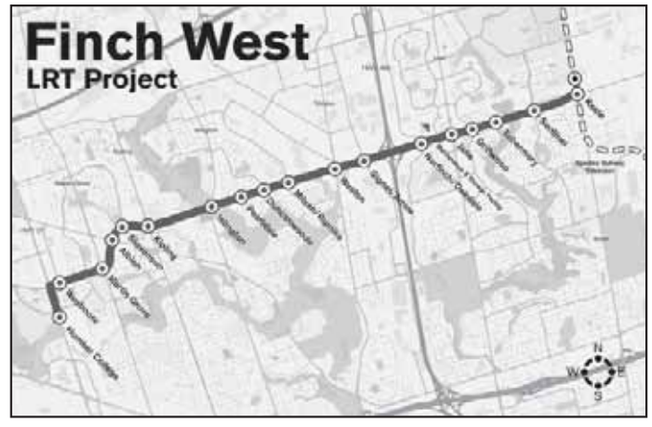
Finch West Light Rail Transit Update
Open House Meetings

Please join us for an update on the Finch West Light Rail Transit (LRT) project, including the reference concept design for the stops, information on the maintenance and storage facility, and detail on public realm elements. At any of the following meetings, you can find out more about what is happening and how it may affect you and your neighbourhood.

The Finch West LRT will bring a new rapid transit experience to your community, with 18 stops through northwest Toronto, including an underground interface station at Keele Street. Running along the surface of Finch Avenue between Humber College and Keele Street, this reliable and comfortable transit line is approximately 11-kilometres long and will connect to the new Finch West subway station on the Toronto-York Spadina subway extension.

Construction is scheduled to begin in 2017.



Open House Dates and Locations:

Monday January 11, 2016
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
St. Wilfrid Catholic School (Gym)
1685 Finch Ave W.

Tuesday January 12, 2016
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Julius Banquet Centre
2201 Finch Ave W.

Wednesday January 13, 2016
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Father Henry Carr (Cafeteria)
1760 Martin Grove Rd.

For more Finch West LRT information:

Visit www.metrolinx.com/finchwest
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Guitar hits auction to aid Ikea monkey

Darwin, the Ikea monkey, is getting a bigger home and new roommates thanks in part to British comedian Ricky Gervais.

The Sunderland, Ont., animal sanctuary Darwin now calls home is raising money for the new additions by auctioning off a signed guitar donated by the actor and his partner, Jane Fallon.

The couple and the Story Book Farm Primate Sanctuary first connected when the sanctuary reached out on Twitter, offering a token of appreciation for the couple's animal rights activism.

"They've really changed the landscape for animal rights in the world we live in today," Story Book board member Caroline Bartett told Torstar News Service.

"(Gervais) has such a voice and such a presence in social media that he brings matters that may not have been spoken about previously to the world," she said, citing Gervais' opposition to a recent dog-meat-eating festival and his condemnation of the killing of Cecil the Lion.

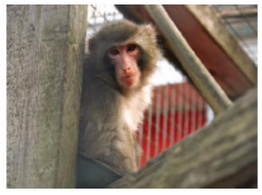
The sanctuary offered Gervais and Fallon a painting created by one of their charges, Pockets Warhol.

"Pockets does wonderful paintings, and we thought it would be really nice to offer them a lovely gift on behalf of the monkeys and everyone at Story Book," Bartett said.

"It was through this relationship of art that a really special friendship developed."

Gervais and Fallon donated the guitar last fall while Gervais was in town working on his film Special Correspondents.

Ricky Gervais has donated a signed guitar to an Ontario primate sanctuary that houses Darwin the Ikea monkey, seen below. THE CANADIAN PRESS; MARTA IWANEK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



The sanctuary put the guitar up for auction on eBay Monday, with plans to put the proceeds toward building a bigger enclosure to accommodate Darwin, as well as two new monkeys.

Cody and Pugsley, who are male Rhesus macaque monkeys, will be Darwin's first roommates. They are set to arrive this month from a transplant research lab at a Canadian university.

Darwin has been living at the sanctuary for three years.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

So mulch fir Christmas

ENVIRONMENT

City expects to collect about 100,000 trees for composting

Luke Simcoe
Metro | Toronto

It's the mulch wonderful time of the year.

The city's annual Christmas tree pickup started this week and crews are expected to collect roughly 100,000 discarded yuletide firs by the end of January.

Once carefully decorated and adored, the trees will be stored at transfer stations before being thrown into the wood chipper and turned into municipal mulch.

"We shred them and grind them up and then they're mixed with other types of yard waste," said Lisa Duncan, Toronto's acting director of litter operations.

All told, Christmas trees generate about 3,700 tonnes of mulch every year, she said; material that's used as compost in city-owned parks and gardens and given away to gardeners during Toronto's Environment Days.

Every last bit of holiday joy — ornaments, lights, tinsel and the like — must be removed from trees before they're dragged, kicked or hurled to the curb, Duncan warned. Trees may not be placed in bags, she added, and should only be put out on collection day.

People who don't follow the rules will have their trees left behind.

"A lot of people put them out as soon as they're done with them and if there's a storm they blow all over the place," Duncan said. "We've found them in parks across the way in the spring."

Christmas tree collection dates for your neighbourhood can be found online at the city's website or in your local garbage calendar. If you miss the pickup date, trees can always be dropped off at city depots.

Festive trees like these will be picked up and stored in facilities around Toronto before being unceremoniously ground up into mulch for city-owned parks and gardens. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

> **A lot of people put them out as soon as they're done with them, and if there's a storm they blow all over the place.**
> Lisa Duncan

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Exploring 'value of a girl'

THEATRE

Play tells story of Nigeria's Boko Haram kidnap victims

Chiamaka Umeh as Hasana and Amanda Weise as Ladi in **All Our Yesterdays.** CONTRIBUTED

They were in their last year of high school, poised to write an important physics exam, when Boko Haram descended on their Nigerian town and took them away.

The 276 girls kidnapped by Islamic extremists became the subject of a social media storm in April of 2014 under the viral hashtag #BringBackOurGirls. Toronto playwright Chloe Hung, studying theatre in New York, was struck by the widespread reaction to the event.

"It seemed to be a bit different," she said. "I thought, 'Something must happen, they must be found.'"

Then, in October 2014, came a report about Boko Haram victims being rescued, but the missing girls from Chibok were not in that group.

"In those six months, I had forgotten those girls, like the rest of the world," laments Hung, 25. "That's how it goes. 'There's another tragedy.'"

The girls — 219 of whom are still missing — filled her imagination and a class writing assignment, where she depicted two sisters in captivity; that was the first step in her creation of All Our Yesterdays. The play, running Jan. 7-17 at Factory Theatre as part of the Next Stage Festival, premiered at the Toronto Fringe, where it was named Patron's Pick.

"I've been pleasantly surprised by the feedback," Hung says, adding she was frequently asked why she chose the topic.

"I really felt so strongly about the story. It's about the value of a girl. I wanted to explore how (when) they are so far away they can slip out of our consciousness."

She relates to the girls who were taken.

"The detail that resonates with me is they were about to write a physics exam," says Hung, who attended Bishop Strachan School. "I hated physics. I imagined them studying and cramming."

All Our Yesterdays focuses entirely on two kidnapped sisters without any depiction of their captor.

"I didn't want it to be about Boko Haram," says Hung, "If (their captor) were onstage, the focus would be on him. I wanted to keep the story about the two girls."

She tells the story with scenes from past and present, explaining the relationship between the two sisters. Hasana, the younger, is on the autism spectrum and much of her care has been left to Ladi, older and resentful. Ladi has attended school while Hasana has had to pick up what she can on her own.

The impending forced marriage of Ladi to their captor ignites the action.

Canadian actresses Amanda Weise and Amaka Umeh play the sisters. Hung auditioned them both and directs the play.

The title is a quote from Shakespeare's Macbeth, but Hung explains no more, hoping the audience will discover its meaning on their own.

Part of the ticket-sale proceeds is being donated to the Save the Children Fund.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

219

Number of Nigerian girls still counted as missing from Boko Haram's 2014 mass abduction.

CRIME

Stabbing: six people sought

Toronto police are searching for six people after a Tuesday-evening stabbing that put a man in hospital.

The victim, in his 20s, stumbled into the Pickle Barrel restaurant, just north of Yonge-Dundas Square, to get help at around 7:30 p.m.

The man was suffering from a single stab wound to the leg and bleeding badly.

He was taken to hospital, where he underwent surgery overnight.

As of Wednesday morning the man was in stable condition, said police spokesman Const. Craig Brister.

Officers were canvassing the area near Yonge and Dundas streets Wednesday for security footage of the attack.

Police say one of the suspects wore a black windbreaker and had a large knife.

Brister said investigators do not have full descriptions for the six alleged assailants, nor do they know how or why the stabbing happened.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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INDIGENOUS ISSUES

Families meet to talk about coming inquiry

The families of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls have been gathering for years — to share their stories, support each other and call for action — but this time was different.

Now that the federal government has committed to holding a national inquiry into the more than 1,200 First Nations, Métis and Inuit women and girls who have been murdered or gone missing in Canada, families came together in Thunder Bay on Wednesday to share their hopes and fears of what it will set out to achieve.

"A lot of people were feeling that they were finally going to have an opportunity to have some closure," said deputy grand chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum of Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

"Maybe the justice may not take place, but I think even being provided an opportunity to be heard ... and having an opportunity to change the present process (is important)," said Achneepineskum, who was at the pre-inquiry consultation meeting Wednesday.

So were Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett and Status of Women Minister Patricia Hajdu, who along with Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould are hearing from families, indigenous organizations, front-line service providers and other stakeholders.

The ministers are scheduled to hold similar meetings in Yellowknife, Whitehorse, Vancouver, Prince George, B.C., Halifax, Quebec City and Montreal before the end of the month.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Shovelling trio don't miss an African beat

For Richard Laubonet, the important thing in life is to put joy in everything you do.

And that's exactly what the African dance and fitness instructor did when he and two friends picked up shovels to clear an area of a park in north-end Montreal.

In a video that has since garnered almost 380,000 views on Facebook, Laubonet and friends Kevin Noah (from Cameroon) and Abdul Somade (from Togo) fling heaps of snow over their shoulders in a choreographed dance set to African music.

They laugh and sing and use their shovels as props while moving in unison in the impromptu dance in the snow.

"I'm still blown away. I just can't believe it," Laubonet said about the response.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Richard Laubonet, Kevin Noah, and Abdul Somade sing and use shovels as props while dancing to move snow. SCREENSHOT

IN BRIEF

Canada cheers its very first Master of Memory

A Nova Scotia student has made history as Canada's first International Master of Memory during the 24th annual World Memory Championship in December.

"It's a phenomenal accomplishment," said Chris Strickey of King's-Edgehill School in Windsor, where Grade 10 student Evan Xie attends.

Strickey said Xie has become one of only 160 people in the world to receive the distinction. To receive the award, a person must complete three feats at the competition: memorize a minimum of 1,000 digits in random sequence in one hour, memorize a minimum of 12 decks of randomly shuffled cards in one hour and memorize one card deck in less than two minutes.

HALEY RYAN/METRO

Who's white, black and cute all over?

Newly named male polar bear cubs York and Eli are shown at Winnipeg's Assiniboine Park Zoo. The zoo says York refers to York Factory First Nation, which has traditional lands that include important polar bear denning habitats. Eli is named in honour of an elder from the First Nation that lived and hunted in the area between the Nelson and Hayes Rivers.

HANDOUT/ASSINIBOINE ZOO/ THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ottawa faces heat for Tories' IT rules

CONSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGE

Decision took away ability of courts to select own purchases

Newly released documents show the country's highest court is ready to launch a legal battle with the federal government over new IT rules which the Supreme Court of Canada fears would threaten its independence.

The Supreme Court is not alone in these concerns: the Federal Court, Federal Court of Appeal, Court Martial Appeal Court and Tax Court are all prepared to launch a constitutional challenge against having the government's super-IT department involved in their digital affairs.

The federal Liberals are now left to decide how to handle an issue created by a decision of the previous Conservative government that came into effect during the federal election.

That decision forced the courts to go through Shared Services Canada for all IT purchases, such as servers, routers and software, rather than letting them make the procurements on their own. The courts had that power until Sept. 1, when the new rules kicked in and made them a "mandatory client" of Shared Services Canada, which oversees purchases and digital services for 43 of the heaviest IT users in the federal government.

The move approved by the Conservative cabinet in May 2015 was supposed to save money, since Shared Services Canada buys in bulk for the federal government, and improve digital security, because Shared Services Canada buys from safe suppliers.

Briefing material provided to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau shortly after he took office shows the courts were worried that having a government department involved in their IT services "and the perceived implications for control of their data" infringed on judicial independence.

"They must maintain control of their data, not only because of concerns about confidentiality, but also because an independent judiciary cannot tolerate having its sensitive information controlled by a separate branch of government," reads part of Trudeau's briefing on urgent issues facing the new government.

If the government doesn't backtrack on the cabinet decision, the country's top judges "are prepared to take legal action," Trudeau was warned.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

BREWING

Vile, century-old beer still 'the best'

It was the best of beers. It was the worst of beers (almost).

The century-old bottle from A. Keith & Son Brewery, the precursor to Halifax-based Alexander Keith's brewing company, was discovered in November on the bottom of Halifax harbour.

It has since undergone testing by experts at Dalhousie University who determined it was definitely beer, and it was safe — ish — to drink.

Local bar owner Chris Reynolds, who originally volunteered to have the discovery tested in a lab, finally got his chance to try a vial of the beer on Tuesday.

"No, it's not the worst I've ever tasted," he said with a laugh. "I wouldn't want to drink a pint of it."

The historic beverage is believed to have been bottled between 1872 and 1890.

Given that the beer's original shelf life would be "in the order of a month or two," according to Alexander Keith's brew master Steve Durand, it's unlikely to taste much like it did when first bottled.

For Reynolds, an enthusiastic home brewer and bar owner, tasting such a historic beer was still a special experience.

"Despite the taste, it was one of the best beers I've ever had. Beers are all about context."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

A scientist and Chris Reynolds, an expert on craft brewing, sample century-old beer. CONTRIBUTED/THE CANADIAN PRESS

ROYAL FAMILY

Young prince has class

The heir to the heir to the heir to the British throne has started nursery school.

Prince William and his wife Kate marked the occasion by releasing two photographs of two-and-a-half-year-old George outside the school building.

The royal couple had earlier announced he would be attending Westacre Montessori School in Norfolk, 180 kilometres north of London.

The school has said he will receive the same treatment as other pupils.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Prince William and wife Kate released these images of son George on his first day at school. CONTRIBUTED/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

H-bomb threat provokes world

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

North Korea condemned globally

Soon after the ground shook around its nuclear testing facility, North Korea trumpeted its first hydrogen bomb test — a self-proclaimed "H-bomb of justice" that would mark a major and unanticipated advance for its still-limited nuclear arsenal.

The announcement Wednesday by the defiant, impoverished country was met with widespread skepticism, as well as a strong condemnation by the UN Security Council, which said it would begin work on a resolution for new international sanctions.

North Korea's fourth nuclear test likely pushed its scientists and engineers closer to their goal of building a warhead small enough to place on a missile that can reach the U.S. mainland. But South Korea's spy agency thought the estimated explosive yield from the blast was much smaller than what even a failed hydrogen bomb detonation would produce, and the White House said its early analysis of underground activity "is not consistent" with the North's claim of a successful H-bomb test.

There was high-level concern in Seoul and elsewhere. South Korean President Park Geun-hye ordered her military to bolster its combined defence posture with U.S. forces. She called the test a "grave provocation" and "an act that threatens our lives and future." Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said, "We absolutely cannot allow this."

U.S. Defence Secretary Ash Carter spoke by phone with his South Korean counterpart Han Min-Koo, and they agreed that a North Korean nuclear test would be an "unacceptable and irresponsible provocation," according to Carter's spokesman, Peter Cook.

North Korea goes to great lengths to conceal its tests by conducting them underground and tightly sealing off vents through which radioactive residue could escape.

A successful H-bomb test would be a big advance in North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Fusion is the main principle behind the hydrogen bomb, which can be hundreds of times more powerful than atomic bombs that use fission..

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

> **We absolutely cannot allow this.**
> Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe

UNITED STATES

Gun measures fall short

The gun control measures President Barack Obama announced Tuesday would not have prevented the slaughters of 20 first-graders at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, or 14 county workers at a holiday party in San Bernardino, Calif.

Obama's executive action expands mandatory background checks to gun shows, flea markets and online sales, adds more than 230 examiners and staff to help process them and calls on states to submit accurate and updated criminal history data.

Those measures are seen as crucial to stemming gun suicides — the cause of two-thirds of gun deaths — by blocking immediate access to weapons. But an Associated Press review shows they would have had no impact in keeping weapons from suspects in several of the deadliest recent mass shootings. The shooters at Sandy Hook and San Bernardino used weapons bought by others, shielding them from background checks. In other cases, the shooters legally bought guns.

Obama rejected the idea that undermines the changes are not worth pursuing.

"We maybe can't save everybody, but we could save some," Obama said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Iraq offers to mediate
Iraq has offered to mediate between Saudi Arabia and Iran after tensions soared following the kingdom's execution of a Shiite cleric. Iraq's Shiite-led government relies on Iranian help to battle the Islamic State group, but is also trying to repair ties to oil-rich Saudi Arabia.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Violence shortens life expectancy in Mexico
A new study suggests that at its peak, Mexico's drug violence was so bad it caused male life expectancy to drop by months.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Twitter is not tied to 140-character limit

SOCIAL MEDIA

CEO tweets screenshot of 1,325-character message

Twitter appears ready to loosen its decade-old restriction on the length of messages in a bid to make its service more appealing to a wider audience accustomed to the greater freedom offered by Facebook and other forums.

CEO and co-founder Jack Dorsey telegraphed Twitter's intentions in a tweet posted Tuesday after the technology news site Re/Code reported the company is exploring increasing its limits on text from 140 characters to as many as 10,000.

Dorsey didn't directly address the Re/Code report that cited unnamed people, but he made it clear that Twitter isn't wedded to the 140-character limit. He illustrated his point by posting a screenshot of a text consisting of 1,325 characters.

If Twitter were to allow tweets to span 10,000 characters, it could produce 1,700-word dissertations, based on the size of Dorsey's extended post. In his message, Dorsey wrote that Twitter has already noticed that many of its roughly 300 million users already have been including screenshots of lengthy texts in their tweets. He indicated Twitter is examining ways to give people more room to express themselves without polluting the service with gasbags.

Imposing some restraint "inspires creativity and brevity. And a sense of speed. We will never lose that feeling," Dorsey pledged.

At the same time, Dorsey said Twitter isn't "going to be shy about building more utility and power into Twitter for people. As long as it's consistent with what people want to do, we're going to explore it."

Analysts said Dorsey is probably trying to avoid a backlash among long-time Twitter users who consider the 140-character tweeting limit sacred. At the same time, he needs to respond to company shareholders pining for a bigger audience that would generate more advertising revenue.

More revenue eventually could help Twitter turn a profit for the first time in its history.

Twitter can't afford "to become stagnant, they need to get bigger if they want to build a more relevant advertising platform," said Topeka Capital Markets analyst Blake Harper.

After a long streak of robust growth that turned it into one of the Internet's hottest companies, Twitter's growth has slowed dramatically during the past year-and-half to leave it scrambling to catch up with social networking leader Facebook and its 1.5 billion users.

The pressure has been building on Dorsey to take drastic measures to accelerate user growth as Twitter's stock has sunk further below its November 2013 initial public offering price of $26 US. The shares shed 64 cents Tuesday to close at $21.92, a decline of nearly 40 per cent from where they stood from when Dorsey became CEO last summer.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Twitter co-founder and CEO Jack Dorsey telegraphed that change is coming in a tweet on Tuesday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

> **As long as it's consistent with what people want to do, we're going to explore it.** Jack Dorsey

IN BRIEF

Star Wars unseats Avatar
In just 20 days in theatres, Star Wars: The Force Awakens has unseated Avatar as the No. 1 North American movie of all time. As of Tuesday, the film was just shy of the record at $758.2 million. THE CANADIAN PRESS

TransCanada to file claim
TransCanada Corp. says it intends to file a claim under Chapter 11 of the North American Free Trade Agreement in response to the U.S. government's rejection of its Keystone XL pipeline.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

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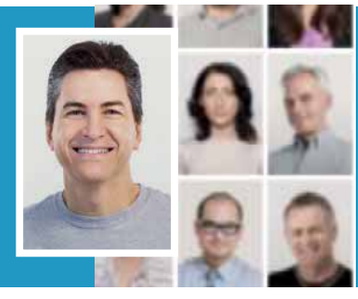

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metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Thursday, January 7, 2016

the big question

Will Obama's tears endear Americans to gun control?

Well, he's unlikely to sway the NRA, but as far as emotional impact goes, **breaking down on live TV isn't a bad strategy for the president**. Scientists have many theories about why adults cry, given that, unlike children, they can use words to express what's wrong. Some speculate that crying evolved as an "attachment behaviour": It's a way to ask others for help when words fail us. And in fact, some studies suggest that photos of teary faces and sad stories with characters who cry both cause research participants to feel sympathetic sadness and a desire to support and comfort the crying person. If Barack Obama — who choked up Tuesday while enumerating the seemingly endless mass shootings that have rocked the U.S. during his presidency — elicited such empathy in his audience, logically they'd want to support his plan to ensure more gun dealers are licensed and conduct background checks. That's guaranteed to make the gun nuts want to weep.

Politician + alcoholism does not equal Rob Ford

Michael Coren
For Metro

To state the bitterly self-evident, politics is a dirty business. But there is also a cloak of decorum that sometimes covers the body politic, with journalists respecting the personal struggles and private pain of many of those who govern us.

There are times when the private and the public mingle to such an extent that we have a right to know.

I have often been impressed at how what is genuinely important on an individual but not political level has remained confidential.

But there are times, of course, when the private and the public mingle to such an extent that we have a right to know. Newly minted Liberal MP and former broadcaster Seamus O'Regan obviously believed this when he recently announced that he is seeking help in a treatment centre to "live an alcohol-free life." In other words, he struggles with alcohol, and as he begins his new work as a representative of the people, realizes that now is the time to change.

I have good friends who have acted similarly. The treatment can be relatively brief, but it's thorough and tough and the struggle never ends. Yet the hardest part is over: the admission that there is a problem. It's humbling, frightening and, of course, opens one up to attack. As it most certainly did in this case.

Within hours of the O'Regan's statement, various conservative activists and even columnists and broadcasters were on the offensive, claiming that the man was "a drunk" and digging up criticisms he had made of former Toronto mayor Rob Ford. There's no difference between the two, they argued, but because one is a Liberal and close to Justin Trudeau he's getting an easy ride.

The juxtaposition is fatuous, offensive and downright cruel. I know O'Regan a little and have always found him to be a gentleman, but the greater point is that unlike Rob Ford, he was completely honest about his problem, there is no police investigation, he doesn't associate with shady characters, there are no manic, racist rants and no embarrassing those people he represents.

Ford used prohibited drugs and repeatedly lied about it. O'Regan drank too much of what is sold on every major street in Canada and told us so. His husband tweeted how proud he was of his decision; Rob Ford is on film offering his wife to another man for sex.

What is remarkable is not how similar, but how different are these two cases. As for those who attacked a man at his most vulnerable, shame on you.

Michael Coren is a writer, broadcaster and author of the forthcoming Epiphany: A Christian's Change of Heart & Mind over Same-Sex Marriage. Find him on Twitter @michaelcoren.

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD

metroview

Charlie Hebdo is just not interesting enough to offend me

Despite being Catholic, I'm not offended by the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo's new cover depicting God as a Kalashnikov-wielding terrorist.

I suppose I could be — the Vatican newspaper is — but that would mean taking the editorial position of the notoriously inflammatory publication seriously. And I don't.

To be clear: The attack one year ago today at Charlie Hebdo's Paris offices was unconscionable, as was the subsequent attack on a Jewish supermarket in the city, which together killed 17 people.

But demeaning faith in the most violent pen strokes is the magazine's raison d'être, and so I'm not surprised or offended by Charlie Hebdo marking the anniversary with everything it's got.

According to the Associated Press, the magazine features editorials attacking "university students who wear veils or openly pray in classrooms, hospital patients who refuse medical treatment from someone of the opposite sex and France's intelligence community. Mixed in were blasphemous caricatures targeting a range of beliefs, obscene sketches" and colourful profanity.

One editor wrote the magazine is commemorating colleagues who died "for daring to laugh at religion."

Richard Rohr, a prominent U.S. Catholic priest, has said he loves when atheists laugh at religions for stories like the Garden of Eden, because "No one believes that." Those stories are metaphors, he says, intended to describe a God who is otherwise indescribable.

Charlie Hebdo's atheism is as simplistic as laughing at a virgin birth. The magazine is practically fundamental in its anti-religious stance. Meanwhile, globally, eight in 10 people identify with a religion.

The magazine doesn't even speak to the more secular western experience of faith. In Canada, for example, fully 73 per cent of people believe in God, though only 30 per cent subscribe to a religion.

Not only does a cover like yesterday's not surprise me, then, it doesn't even stimulate me intellectually. The magazine can heap scorn better than most, but it has a juvenile understanding of that which it hates, and constructs no reasonable alternative.

The magazine makes the mistake of thinking insulting people is, de facto, a worthy goal. And in its commitment to offend and anger strangers, it has something in common with terrorist propaganda videos (on a far lesser scale).

On the other hand, the magazine does support the free movement of ideas by exploring the outermost reaches of free speech.

I'll give it that, and then get on with my faith.

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Your essential daily news

HBO will pull the plug on its hit comedy Girls after the show's sixth season next year

On the topic of Navel Gazing

WHO IS BLACK?

Michael Ian Black swears that he has "no interest" in celebrity culture. "I hate it," he said, "maybe because I'm not enough of a celebrity to get the perks." Let's take him at his word. But here's how you might otherwise know the sly comedian:

Wet Hot American Summer
Black stars in the best known sequence of this recently Netflix-revived cult favourite: a surprisingly tender love scene with Bradley Cooper. In his new book, Black reveals that they both wore tube socks because Black was so self-conscious about his feet.

Jim Gaffigan Show

Black plays Daniel, the meticulously put-together antagonist to the show's everyman titular star. The pair have a gift for repartee on Twitter, too. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

INTERVIEW

Michael Ian Black shows a vulnerable side in new book

With a pair of deeply honest memoirs, comedian Michael Ian Black has now allowed a public transition from irony-shielded comic prankster to real, fully dimensional person.

And all that pesky humanity has led to some uncomfortable moments.

"Because I have the gift of being unapproachable and kind of a dick, people rarely share with me, but I have noticed that people who have read the book feel like they know me (and) my marriage, and that's a strange thing to encounter," he said recently. "It's especially weird for my wife when people meet her and they're like: 'Oh yes, I know all about you.' That doesn't go over well."

The furiously prolific Black — who is simultaneously starring in several shows including Another Period and The Jim Gaffigan Show, hosting the popular podcast How to Be Amazing and compulsively nurturing a massive Twitter following — has returned to the realm of autobiography with the newly released Navel Gazing. The book finds the Wet Hot American Summer star observing his mother's stoic struggle with cancer while curiously investigating the physical insecurities that have plagued him as long as he can remember.

Michael Ian Black's latest book finds him observing his mother's struggle with cancer and investigating the physical insecurities that have plagued him since childhood. MIKE POINT/WIRE IMAGE

Somehow, a book about a family member's grave diagnosis is unfathomably funny.

For this he credits his mother, whom he interviewed extensively and "got to know a lot better." For instance, Black's mom followed one of her many major surgeries — which included the removal of her belly button — by taking a marker and scrawling florid thank-yous to hospital staff across her stomach.

Between this intimate memoir and his last, You're Not Doing it Right — which the author says was too personal even for his wife, who has chosen not to read his latest book — Black has revealed depths that even close friends didn't know he had.

The one place he doesn't have to worry about those revelations reverberating, however, is Hollywood. "People in show business don't read," he said. "There's little to no danger of them having read my book."

How is your mother doing?
Terribly. Her illnesses are nonstop and unabating. That's a very hard thing for her to live with and for those of us who love her to live with. But her attitude about it has always been remarkable. It's inspiring.

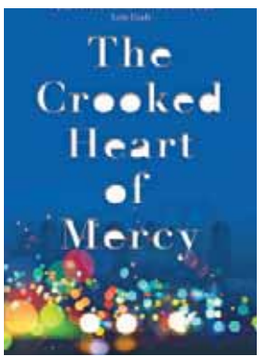
How did she react to your book?
She loved it. There was no pushback about anything, which makes me think she didn't read it. But she said she did, so that's good enough for me. That means I can publish it.

You mentioned your wife Martha didn't want to read it. How about your kids?
Oh God, no, not at all. They don't care about anything.

Even (teenage son) Elijah?
He's expressed no interest in it and I have no interest in sharing it with him. I assume there will come a point in his life — probably after I suffer a heart attack in the next six months — where he will have some curiosity about his history and my life. Now he has two books he can read for that information.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

NEW BOOK

Author credits volatile childhood for her sense of humour



Sue Carter
For Metro Canada

Billie Livingston has long been haunted by a family story that happened before she was born. Her father — a con artist whom she fictionalized in her 2012 novel One Good Hustle — and his first wife lost their two-year-old son after the toddler accidentally fell out a second-story window. "The shame and fear and grief. How do you ever get over something like that?" asks Livingston.

In her new novel, The Crooked Heart of Mystery (Random House Canada), the Vancouver author attempts to answer this question by drawing on real-life stories.

Following the death of her son, grief-stricken Maggie becomes a domestic helper for a woman who worships at a church that encourages after-death visits from loved ones. Meanwhile, Maggie's estranged husband, Ben, lies in a hospital bed with an unexplained bullet lodged in his head after taking veterinary drugs. (Ben's narrative originated with a Florida news story about a young man who shot himself during a bad mushroom trip, believing he was still asleep.)

Completing the triangle of grief is Maggie's brother Francis, a priest whose appetites for sex and alcohol land him a DUI and the star role in the viral video, "Drunk Priest Propositions Cops." Bullied horrifically as a child for being gay, Francis — whose character stemmed from a priest friend of Livingston's in rehab for alcohol — always found protection in the church, and despite his violations, remains planted in some kind of personal faith.

While The Crooked Heart of Mystery could have been mired in bleak hopelessness, Livingston has a light touch, an ability to find moments of humour even in the trio's heartbreaking situation. It's a gift she credits to her own volatile upbringing.

Beyond her father's grifting, her mother was a "pretty severe" addict, and young Livingston spent much of her childhood in and out of foster homes.

"There was a lot of dark stuff in my family," she says.

"There was always some mayhem going on. That's how we dealt with the darkest periods, which was to say something completely outrageous, because how else are you going to survive?"

Sue Carter is the editor at Quill & Quire magazine.

Making a Murderer has everyone talking

STREAMING

A primer to the doc dissecting a complex legal case

The 10-part Netflix documentary series Making a Murderer, which casts doubt on the legal process in the case of convicted killers Steven Avery and his then-teenage nephew Brendan Dassey, has prompted celebrities to armchair sleuths to flood online message boards and Twitter feeds.

Authorities involved with the Wisconsin case say the series is slanted and omits crucial facts that led to Avery and Dassey being found guilty in the death of photographer Teresa Halbach.

The filmmakers, meanwhile, are standing by their work that spans nearly a decade and largely concentrates on the defence and perspective of Avery and Dassey's relatives.

The rush of attention has left many wondering: How did we get here? And what's next?

The back story

Avery made national headlines in 2003 when he was released after spending nearly two decades behind bars after being wrongfully convicted of rape. Two years later, Avery and Dassey were charged with killing Halbach, who visited the Avery family salvage yard to take photos of a minivan on Halloween. Her bones and belongings were found burned near Avery's trailer. Both were convicted and sentenced to life terms, but only Dassey is eligible for parole — in 2048.

The series' take

The documentary strongly suggests the possibility that Manitowoc County sheriff's deputies planted evidence against Avery, including a key found in his bedroom and blood found in the victim's vehicle. But Sheriff Robert Hermann denied that Tuesday. He said he watched the series: "I call it a film. It's missing a lot of important pieces of evidence."

Authorities say doc is biased

The series spends much of its time detailing the perspective of Avery and Dassey family members. The case's special prosecutor, Ken Kratz has told other media outlets that the documentary ignores the majority of the physical evidence. The omissions include the fact that Avery's DNA was found on the hood latch on Halbach's SUV, which was hidden on the salvage lot. Kratz has also said a bullet fired from Avery's gun was found in his garage with Halbach's DNA on it.

The filmmakers disagree

Laura Ricciardi and Moira Demos have stood by their work. They said in an email to the AP that critics who might say they intentionally omitted or underplayed key evidence to make the series more entertaining or tragic are wrong. "Those accusations are untrue and unfounded," the statement said.

Online petition

It seems unlikely an online petition seeking a pardon will work. The request posted on Change.org started by petitioning President Barack Obama, who has no such authority in this type of case, since it's not a federal matter. Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker spokesperson Laurel Patrick said Tuesday in an email to the AP that the governor hasn't watched the series and that "early in his administration, Gov. Walker made the decision not to issue pardons. Those who feel they have been wrongly convicted can seek to have their convictions overturned by a higher court."

Viewer reaction

Celebrities have tweeted about how into the series they are, late night talk show host Seth Meyers spoofed it and fake Twitter accounts have been set up for some of the main players in the case. However, Sheriff Hermann said some of his officers have received threats in emails and voicemails. He said one was from a convicted felon who said an officer should "take his own life, or else he'd come up there and take it for him." Hermann said Tuesday that threat was passed along to Florida authorities to investigate. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brendan Dassey is escorted into court in 2007 for sentencing. Dassey's case is at the centre of the Netflix documentary series Making a Murderer. HERALD TIMES/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Inside Spotify's musical genre splicing

SONIC ALGORITHMS

Breaking down music by its digital signatures

Would you classify Justin Bieber as pop or "pop Christmas"? And is Arcade Fire a rock band or "permanent wave"? How about describing Ed Sheeran as "neo mellow," Alabama Shakes as "stomp and holler" or the versatile Grimes as "grave wave," "metropopolis," "nu gaze," or all of the above?

Spotify's "data alchemist" Glenn McDonald can proudly claim authorship of some of those eccentric descriptors. His company has used a complex algorithm to analyze and categorize upwards of 60 million songs on a molecular level — and the micro-classifications now number 1,387 sub-genres in total.

Ultimately, these machinations are allowing a new level of specificity to answer that impossible old first-date query: What kind of music are you into?

"The most interesting thing is how much music there is in the world," McDonald said. "The number of places where I expected to find five or 10 bands and found 200 is just amazing."

Using a tool called machine listening, songs are analyzed by Spotify's music-intelligence division the Echo Nest based on their digital signatures for a number of factors, including tempo, acoustic-ness, energy, danceability, strength of the beat and emotional tone.

Taken together, those numbers can identify the distinguishing aural characteristics of different genres and regional sounds. McDonald has provided a visual representation of the subtle sonic differences at everynoise.com, which maps music along a spectrum where mechanical sounds reside at the top, organic at the bottom, atmospheric on the left and bouncy on the right.

The still-evolving tool can highlight the subtle differences in the hip-hop of Quebec and Finland, for instance, or create cross-genre comparisons between such unlikely bedfellows as Thai indie and Spanish new wave. Any curiosity about what a genre called "necrogrind," "fallen angel" or "electrofox" could possibly sound like can be satisfied with a click.

An algorithm used by Spotify defines the sound of Alabama Shakes frontwoman Brittany Howard, left, experimental musicmaker Grimes and singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran. GETTY IMAGES

The process is still imperfect. At one point, the computers confused the sound of the banjo with human singers, simply because not enough banjo samples had been entered. In another instance, Indonesian dangdut was classified as near-identical to American country because, McDonald said, the computers had no protocol to account for twang.

"(People) imagine metal humanoid robots sitting in chairs with silver headphones on nodding mechanically to songs and making up their robot minds," said McDonald. "But the process is totally different. There's no emotion involved. The machines are not pretending to be people.

"They're just trying to find mathematical ways of approximating the effect that humans get from music so the scores can be intelligible and reliable."

Once the machines have identified sonic similarities, a human touch is required to research the sub-genres or create new ones, a task that often falls to McDonald himself. It can be vexing as sub-genres are divvied into progressively tinier fractions; indie pop, for instance, has been subdivided into shiver pop, gauze pop, etherpop, indie fuzz pop, popgaze, and so on.

In analyzing so much musical minutiae, McDonald has noticed that for all this century's rampant boundary-blurring, distinctive differences still exist between types of music.

"I don't think genres have gone away … any more than cuisines have disappeared. There are more fusions," he said. "So just like you can find the Korean burrito place, that doesn't mean there aren't also Korean restaurants and Mexican restaurants.

"Maybe the firmness of the boundaries has gone away. It's more possible to exist in the spaces between genres as they blend into each other."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

JOHANNA SCHNELLER WHAT I'M WATCHING

I'd rather not be kept in the poop, thanks

THE SHOW: Three commercials (Lifetime)
THE MOMENT: The Horror

So I'm watching Lifetime, whose slogan is Television for Women, and a commercial for a constipation product comes on: An accessibly pretty brunette frowns, rubs her tummy, and glugs down a grainy beverage. (Have you noticed that Everywomen are always brunettes, while Bombshells are blondes and Natural Women are redheads?) In the morning, stretching in her jammies, Accessible Brunette smiles to show us all is well… back there. Okay, people need such products, fine. Then a second commercial appears: A different Accessible Brunette walks along clutching a brown shoulder bag, which, very distressingly, grows larger and larger until she nearly buckles. After she consumes her grainy beverage, her purse shrinks back to normal size. While I'm reeling from this depiction of someone collapsing under the bulk of her own poo, a third commercial arrives. This time, Accessible Brunette rides down a spiral slide, but gets stuck halfway — until she consumes a beverage, and glides to the, well, bottom. So now I've watched a woman go from having a tummyache to toting around her waste to actually becoming the waste itself, and I'm thinking, what do Lifetime viewers eat, or perhaps more importantly not eat, that they suffer such indignities? Don't they deserve one commercial where men are buying these products? Why aren't the guys who watch The History Channel or Outdoor Life Network inundated with images of Rakish Fellows toting their poop around? Why is it all beer and car ads for men, and caa-caa for women?

So now I've watched a woman go from having a tummyache to toting around her waste to actually becoming the waste itself

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

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	Check-in	Exit
Group 1	April 22, 2016	April 24, 2016
Group 2	April 30, 2016	May 2, 2016
Group 3	May 6, 2016	May 8, 2016
Group 4	May 14, 2016	May 16, 2016

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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Whirlpool unveils new connected kitchen that can be controlled remotely

Stepping out in Forest Hill

CONTRIBUTED

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

What: Zigg
Builder: Madison Homes and Fieldgate Homes
Architect: Kirkor Architects
Interiors: The Design Agency
Location: 223 St. Clair Ave. W.
Building: An 11-storey building with 166 units including four townhomes
Sizes: 509 to 1,800 sq. ft.
Pricing: From the high $300,000s
Suites: One-, two- and three-bedroom suites and townhomes
Status: Under construction and open to the public
Sales centre: 223 St. Clair Ave. W. Monday to Wednesday 12 - 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday 12 -5 p.m. Closed Thursday, Friday
Phone: 416-545-0223
Website: ziggcondo.com
Email: sales@ziggcondo.com

Project overview

Named after a Ziggurat, an architectural structure that takes the form of a stepped, terraced pyramid. This new, eleven-storey condominium residence in Forest Hill will reflect its contemporary façade with clean lines and neutral tones.

Building amenities

Lifestyle amenities located on the ground floor and roof-top will feature a landscaped terrace with barbecues, linear fireplace and an indoor bar area. There's a private fitness centre and a party room with bar.

Location and transit

Zigg is located in the desirable neighbourhood of Forest Hill, with the St. Clair LRT at the doorstep, and a short distance to either the Yonge or University subway lines, and several downtown bike lanes.

In the neighbourhood

Sir Winston Churchill Park is nearby, with tennis courts, a dog park, running track and open green spaces. Zigg is blocks away from the Forest Hill Village with exclusive shops and restaurants, and the neighbourhood offers some of the best schools in the city. DUNCAN MCALLISTER/FOR METRO

REAL ESTATE

What's hot on the market

DUNCAN MCALLISTER

1 EGLINTON & DUFFERIN

Grand Opening: Briar Hill at Dufferin, two-storey towns with rooftop terraces. Check out the presentation centre at 2 Wingold Ave., near Eglinton and Dufferin.
CONTACT: 647-351-2055, BHSALES@MADISONGROUP.CA

2 KING WEST

Open house: Here's a one bedroom, one bathroom suite at DNA condos in King West Village. Head on over to 1 Shaw St., Suite 623 on Jan. 9 from 2 to 4 p.m.
CONTACT: JOHN MAGUIRE, 416-921-1112

3 WOODBRIDGE

Now open: Phase 3 at Renaissance Townes in Vaughan. Located in the heart of Woodbridge. Visit the presentation centre at 3890 Major Mackenzie Dr. W.
CONTACT: 905-417-3363, PRIMONTHOMES.COM

RETAIL

Tactile experience still desired

Bryan Tuckey
For Metro Canada

It's a good time to reflect on how retail space is evolving now that the busiest shopping season of the year is behind us.

How and where we shop is changing, partly due to online shopping and partly because our region is changing.

Communities are becoming more compact, land prices are rising and many municipalities are focusing development in their urban growth centres. As we grow up and not out, the industry is incorporating retail shops and amenities into new buildings as part of creating complete communities.

As more people shop online, retailers understand that consumers still want a tactile experience in bricks-and-mortar stores. According to recent research by the National Retail Federation consumers spend more when they shop in person.

With that in mind, many retailers are now adapting their stores to fit into an urban context, sometimes on the second or even third floor of buildings and often at the base of residential condominiums.

More and more, retail developers are working with residential developers to respond to the changing marketplace and mandated intensification across the GTA.

> **Many retailers are now adapting their stores to fit into an urban context.**

They combine their expertise and construct functional mixed-use projects that add amenities to benefit those in the building and people living and working in the surrounding neighbourhood.

The mixed-use building at the corner of Queen Street West and Portland Street in Toronto is an example of this. BILD member and retail developer RioCan partnered with fellow member Tribute Communities to incorporate three levels of retail space into the podium of a residential building including a 45,000-square-foot grocery store on the second floor and two major retail outlets at the base.

Another example is The Madison Condos on Eglinton Avenue east of Yonge Street currently under construction by BILD member Madison Homes. The building will feature two levels of retail stores and a second-floor grocery store.

In response to the rise of online shopping and in an effort to maximize their existing sites, another BILD member and shopping centre developer SmartREIT has created a new service called Penguin Pick-up. Partnering with its retail tenants and other businesses that ship to Canada, the company is building pickup points in their shopping centres across the GTA. The 24-hour free pickup is available in Toronto, Vaughan, Oakville and Richmond Hill.

BRYAN TUCKEY IS PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE BUILDING INDUSTRY AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION AND A LAND-USE PLANNER WHO HAS WORKED FOR MUNICIPAL, REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS. FOLLOW HIM ON TWITTER @BILDGTA, FACEBOOK.COM/BILDGTA, AND BILDBLOGS.CA.

ADVICE

Can't avoid levies, can predict them

Jeffrey Cowan
For Metro Canada

Q: I am about to close on my newly built condo that I am purchasing from a builder and my lawyer has sent me the final statement of adjustments. There are 'levies' for parks and development charges that add up to several thousands of dollars in addition to the funds I need to bring in to my lawyer in order to close my purchase. I did not budget for this. Is there any way I can avoid these charges?

A: Standard in all contracts for the purchase of a condo these days are adjustments for a variety of costs; two of the largest are park and development charges. The City charges developers of condo buildings these types of fees in order to support municipal infrastructure and develop greener cities. When you signed the agreement of purchase and sale, there would have been a specific provision outlining these two charges and the builder is now setting those hard costs which they are contractually able to transfer to the individual purchasers. When a client brings me a contract for review, I always advise them to go back to the builder in the cooling off period to get these two important charges 'capped'. This does two things, it makes my client consider these additional costs and allows for budgeting of final costs well in advance of receiving the final statement of adjustments from the builder. You will not be able to avoid these charges but there can be greater certainty approaching final closing. Overall, you should be prepared for numerous final adjustments which will add to the final costs of your new home.

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metro SPORTS

Lakers GM Mitch Kupchak told ESPN that Kobe Bryant's retirement tour comes ahead of the development of L.A.'s young players

Raps down DeMarre

NBA

Carroll lost indefinitely after surgery on wonky knee

That was some visit to the doctor.

While the Toronto Raptors were in the neighbourhood, sore-kneed forward DeMarre Carroll had an appointment for a checkup that turned into much more: arthroscopic surgery that now has Carroll out indefinitely.

"Just happened to be here in New York, seeing Dr. (Richard) Altcheck on the way through, they consulted and decided to get it cleaned out," Raptors coach Dwane Casey said. "(It was) kind of the (way the) treatment situation was going — it kept continuing to swell so they decided to do it."

No one's predicting how long Carroll will be on the sidelines — to guess is folly — but it does mean a substantial change to Toronto's rotation.

"I call it 'unfortunate opportunity,'" Casey said, before the Raptors met the Brooklyn Nets on Wednesday. "Guys have to step up, we have guys who want playing time. James (Johnson) has been patient with D.C. coming back, he hasn't had a lot of run and now is his opportunity.

"I think it's going to be a fluid situation between he and (Terrence) Ross at that (position)."

In the tightly bunched Eastern Conference, however, the Raptors can't afford any sustained losing streak.

They began play Wednesday night tied with the Atlanta Hawks for fourth in the East with a 21-15 record that put them four games behind conference-leading Cleveland and 1-1/2 games in arrears of second-place Chicago.

DeMarre Carroll
GETTY IMAGES

However, Toronto was also only 1-1/2 games out of ninth place in a conference that looks like it will be closely contested all season.

Even before Carroll's surgery — when it was obvious he was in some level of distress — his teammates were hoping he would find a way to be 100 per cent for the stretch run and the post-season.

The Raptors have always pointed to March and April as the time they had to be fully functional and healthy; Carroll will presumably have time and be ready for that moment.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

"The season goes on, we've got a job to do. Dwane Casey

HELLO BROOKLYN, GOODBYE LOSING STREAK Raptors forward Patrick Patterson and the Nets' Thomas Robinson vie for the ball on Wednesday night in Brooklyn. Jonas Valanciunas recorded a double-double of 22 points and 11 rebounds, and the Raptors snapped a two-game losing streak with a 91-74 victory. NATHANIEL S. BUTLER/NBAE VIA GETTY IMAGES

IN BRIEF

Preds trade Jones for Blue Jackets' Johansen

The Nashville Predators traded defenceman Seth Jones to the Columbus Blue Jackets for centre Ryan Johansen on Wednesday, giving up a young piece of their defence in search of some more offence.

Johansen, 23, has 79 goals and 114 assists in 309 career games and was the fourth overall pick in the 2010 draft. Jones, 21, was the fourth overall pick in the 2013 draft.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Royals re-sign Gordon

All-star outfielder Alex Gordon agreed to a $72-million, four-year deal Wednesday to remain with the World Series champion Kansas City Royals.

Gordon hit .271 with 13 homers and 48 RBIs in 104 games last season.

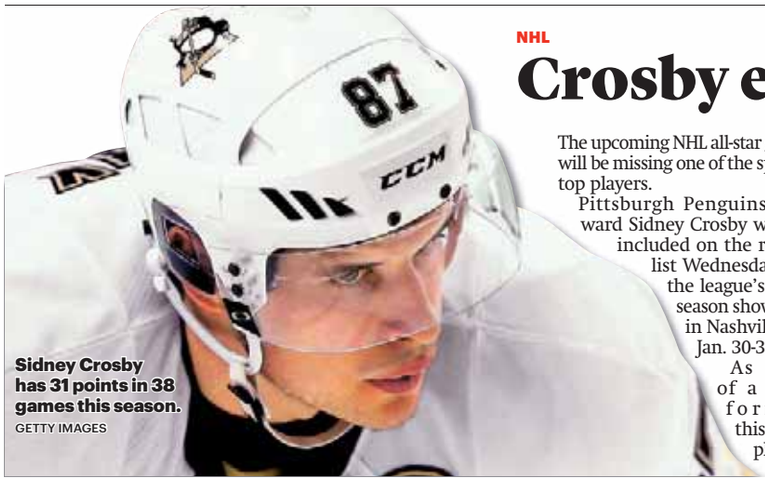
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LeBron and his marketing group drop Manziel

LeBron James and his business partners — LRMR marketing — will no longer work with Browns quarterback Johnny Manziel, who missed Cleveland's season finale Sunday after he was spotted partying in Las Vegas over the weekend.

A spokesman for James said the sides mutually agreed to end their relationship, which began shortly after Manziel was drafted into the NFL.

James expressed concern for Manziel "individually." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Sidney Crosby has 31 points in 38 games this season.
GETTY IMAGES

NHL

Crosby excluded from all-star team

The upcoming NHL all-star game will be missing one of the sport's top players.

Pittsburgh Penguins forward Sidney Crosby wasn't included on the roster list Wednesday for the league's mid-season showcase in Nashville on Jan. 30-31.

As part of a new format this year, players will take part in a three-game tournament, played in a 3-on-3 format, and featuring teams representing each NHL division.

Veteran centre Evgeni Malkin and defenceman Kris Letang will represent the Penguins on the Metropolitan Division team. Roster limitations — six forwards, three defencemen and two goalies for each division — led to Crosby's exclusion.

Crosby, a 28-year-old native of Cole Harbour, has appeared in only one all-star game (2007), missing three due to Olympic commitments and five because of injuries.

His numbers this season are decent but not at their usual level.

Since his 102-point rookie campaign in 2005-06, Crosby has averaged over a point per game in every season until this one. His play has improved of late but he still entered Wednesday's game in Chicago with 31 points (12 goals, 19 assists) in 38 games.

Forward Leo Komarov of the Toronto Maple Leafs and defencemen Erik Karlsson of the Ottawa Senators and P.K. Subban of the Montreal Canadiens were named to the Atlantic Division team.

THE CANADIAN PRESS, WITH FILES FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAPTAINS

Earlier, fans voted Florida's Jaromir Jagr (Atlantic), Chicago's Patrick Kane (Central), Washington's Alex Ovechkin (Metropolitan) and Arizona's John Scott (Pacific) as the division captains.

Green Bay QB has started 11 post-season games while Redskins QB Kirk Cousins has only played in one. WESLEY HITT/GETTY IMAGES

Packed full of experience

NFL

Redskins can't match Green Bay's rich past in post-season

Two straight losses to finish the regular season sapped the Green Bay Packers of momentum going into the playoffs.

They do have at least one distinct advantage in their wild-card matchup this weekend against Washington. Been there, done that. Green Bay is making its franchise-record seventh straight post-season appearance. The New England Patriots are the only other NFL team that has been to the playoffs seven straight years.

"I think that you can harness the feelings and the things that worked in the wins and also think back on the feeling when you lost and your season's over and you try to use that as motivation," quarterback Aaron Rodgers said Wednesday.

The longest-tenured Packer, Rodgers has started 11 post-season games and played in the post-season each year since 2009. The Redskins will be making just their fifth playoff appearance since 1993 and first in three seasons, when they lost a wild-card game at home to Seattle. Washington quarterback Kirk Cousins played in that 24-14 loss on Jan. 6, 2013, entering in relief of injured starter Robert Griffin III. It is his only post-season appearance.

Said Cousins: "Playing at home can certainly help our ability to play at a high level, but as far as does it offset things? I don't know. But I do know (the Packers are) a very experienced, talented team." Looked at another way, Green Bay has 212 games of playoff experience on its roster compared with 76 for Washington, according to STATS.

And that's counting the veterans who came over as free agents, like defensive linemen Terrance Knighton and Ricky Jean Francois, and safety Dashon Goldson, who together have 19 games of post-season experience.

> **"Playing at home can certainly help our ability to play at a high level.**
> Redskins QB Kirk Cousins

"We've got some veteran guys on this team that have really done a great job as far as leadership's concerned of showing the young guys how to work and prepare," Redskins coach Jay Gruden said. But those experiences still pale in comparison to Green Bay, where seasons are judged more by how far the team got in the playoffs rather than just making it.

"That's the expectation and that's what we're all about," second-year receiver Jared Abbrederis said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BASEBALL

Griffey Jr. and Piazza graduate to Hall of Fame

Ken Griffey Jr. has been elected to the baseball Hall of Fame with the highest voting percentage ever and legendary catcher Mike Piazza is joining him.

Jeff Bagwell and former Montreal Expos star Tim Raines fell short in results announced Wednesday. A star slugger of the Steroids Era who was never tainted by accusations of drug use, Griffey was on 437 of 440 votes in his first appearance on the Baseball Writers' Association of America ballot. His 99.3 percentage topped Tom Seaver's 98.84 in 1992. Piazza, on the ballot for the fourth time, received 365 votes.

Mike Piazza GETTY IMAGES

"Incredibly special. Wow," Piazza said on a call with MLB Network.

A prodigious slugger on both coasts, Piazza belted most of his 427 home runs for the Los Angeles Dodgers and New York Mets during a prolific, 16-year career that nearly never took flight.

Famously drafted in the 62nd round as a favour to his father's close friend, Hall of Fame Dodgers manager Tommy Lasorda, Piazza took a mighty rip at those drastically long odds and knocked them over the fence.

He converted from first base to catcher as a pro and blossomed into one of the game's most fearsome hitters, breaking the big league record for home runs by a catcher and compiling a .545 slugging percentage that ranks 28th all-time.

"Congratulations to Mike, an outstanding ballplayer and a great man," Lasorda said in a statement released by the Dodgers. In an era when offence ruled, few batters (if any) hit the ball as hard as Piazza, the incredible hulk of the National League who clubbed opposing pitches with brute force to all fields.

A player needs 75 per cent to gain election. Bagwell missed by 15 votes and Raines by 23 in totals announced Wednesday.

After about 100 writers who no longer are active lost their votes under new rules, there were significant increases for a pair of stars accused of steroids use. Roger Clemens rose to 45 per cent and Barry Bonds to 44 per cent, both up from about 37 per cent last year. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ken Griffey Jr. GETTY IMAGES FILE

IN BRIEF

Brady's ankle healing after Patriots give him time off

New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady says his right ankle is feeling better. Brady walked without an apparent limp for his media availability on Wednesday. He said getting the week off before the Patriots' first playoff game will be helpful. "This is the first time we've had off in quite a while," he said.

Brady has received treatment for his ankle after injuring himself in Sunday's 20-10 Dolphins victory. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seahawks' Lynch back training after injury lay off

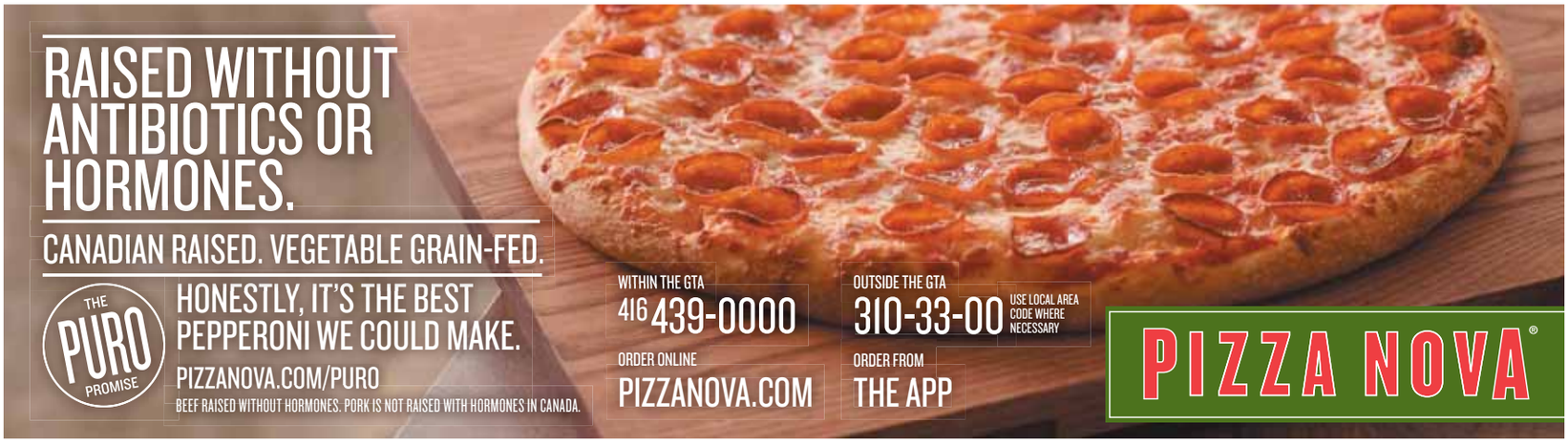
Seattle Seahawks running back Marshawn Lynch is "full go" for returning to practice after being away from the team since undergoing abdominal surgery in late November.

Seahawks coach Pete Carroll said Lynch went through walkthrough on Wednesday morning and was expected to be a full participant in practice later Wednesday. Lynch has not practiced since Week 9. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Everton lead City 2-1 in League Cup semifinal

Romelu Lukaku kept up his hot scoring streak by grabbing a late winner for Everton to beat Manchester City 2-1 in the first leg of their English League Cup semifinal on Wednesday.

Lukaku restored Everton's lead in a thrilling second half at Goodison Park, two minutes after substitute Jesus Navas equalized for City on a counterattack led by Sergio Aguero. Defender Ramiro Funes Mori put Everton ahead off a rebound in first-half injury time. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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RECIPE Pumpkin Gnocchi

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

So good it's worth the effort.

Ready in
Prep time: 60 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 1 1/2 cups pumpkin puree
- 3/4 cup fresh ricotta
- 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, finely grated
- 1 Tbsp brown sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- 1 1/3 cups flour
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/4 lb cremini mushrooms, cleaned, trimmed and sliced
- 3 Tbsp fresh sage, chopped

Directions
1. In a large bowl, combine potato puree with ricotta until well blended. Add the Parmesan, sugar, salt and nutmeg and blend. Add a 1/2 cup of flour at a time until a soft dough forms.

2. Turn dough out onto a well-floured surface and separate into 3 or 4 pieces. Using your hands, roll dough out into a long, even tube, about 10-inch in diameter. With a sharp paring knife, cut each rope into about 20 pieces. Keep working until you have about a 60 pieces.

3. Bring a big pot of well-salted water to a boil.

4. Melt butter in a large skillet until it starts to brown. Add mushrooms and sage and cook for 3 minutes, and remove from heat.

5. Add gnocchi to the boiling water about a dozen at a time. Cook each batch for about 5 or 6 minutes, until the gnocchi floats to the top. Allow water to return to a boil between batches. Place cooked gnocchi in a large bowl and set aside.

6. Once all of the gnocchi is cooked, put the skillet back on the heat. Add your gnocchi and allow it all to heat up together. Gently stir so the pasta gets covered in the sage butter. Serve with a fresh sage for garnish.

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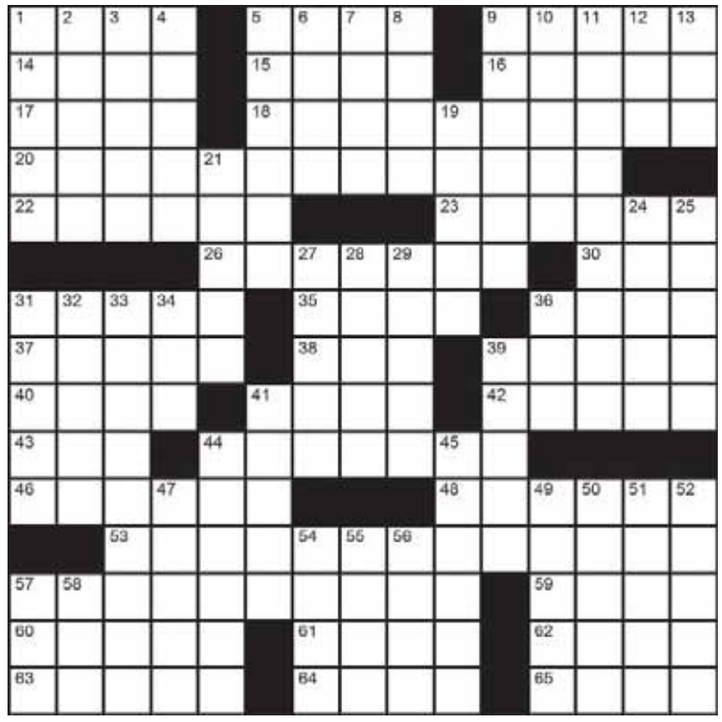
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. 1300 in ancient Rome
5. Mail
9. Record label
14. Director Mr. Petri
15. Entreaty
16. Sir Newton
17. Composer Mr. Schifrin
18. Crown Royal Northern __ __ (Canadian drink which is the 2016 World Whisky of the Year winner as chosen by whisky-expert-from-Britain Jim Murray)
20. Vancouver-born singer/songwriter, lead singer of Chilliwack: 2 wds.
22. Three sharps music key: letter + word
23. Meal
26. Whistlers in kitchens
30. French 'tea'
31. Stockpile
35. Tilled
36. "Buenos __!"
37. Metal mixture
38. Decide
39. Make a funny noise when laughing
40. Scratch
41. Math course, for short
42. Canadian actor Dean McDermott's mother-in-law
43. Olde-style word
44. Bitterness
46. Shoe part
48. Rent your apartment out
53. Tossed workout items: 2 wds.
57. __ Milk (Product by #11-Down)
59. Lioness in "The Lion King" (1994)
60. French composer, Erik __ (b.1866 - d.1925)
61. Crate strip
62. Mideast ruler, variantly
63. Toboggans
64. Choir member
65. Glasgow gal

DOWN
1. Grissol product, __ Toast
2. Insurance filing
3. "You're My World": 1964 hit for __ Black
4. Actor/rapper, LL __ _
5. Globe
6. Exuberance
7. Dweeb
8. Canadian comic actor Mr. Foley
9. Slangy insults
10. Impede, in law
11. As per #57-Across... Food brand with a flowery name and logo
12. Islet
13. Champion
19. Boo-booed
21. Overly sentimental
24. The __ (Tallest building in London in England)
25. Irritable
27. Rose's ouch!-inducer
28. Subject
29. Avril Lavigne's 2002 debut album: 2 wds.
31. Mojave plants
32. "__ __ the Family"
33. Fellow student
34. By what method?
36. Genetic stuff
39. Exfoliating __ (Skincare product)
41. South American animal
44. Changes
45. "Man I __ __ Be" by k-os
47. Lukewarm
49. Vapid
50. Andes animal
51. Island near the Statue of Liberty
52. Sovereign sorts
54. House, in Havana
55. "__ be okay." (There, there)
56. Clean-cut
57. Cousin of -enne
58. Ms. Bertinelli, to pals

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
You will be taken by surprise no matter how prepared you are today. Changes on the work front may be unsettling but if you stay calm and use your head you can easily change them to your advantage.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
You have a lot of new responsibilities and are wondering if you are doing too much. Things will get on top of you today to such an extent you'll be forced to cut back on commitments.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
It is too late to back out of something you thought would be easy — you must go through with it. Strive to make a good job of it and, next time, don't volunteer so eagerly.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
The Sun is at odds with Uranus, planet of changes, and it will shock you out of your complacency. You've coasted along long enough — now you must live up to your potential.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Try not to attach too much importance to minor setbacks. Deal with problems as they arise and don't take anything too seriously. Your attitude to what happens is most important.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Something will force you to change your plans but you don't have to abandon them altogether. The route you were planning to take may be blocked but there are other ways to reach your destination. Be flexible.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You won't get your way today, especially on the home front. You are advised to let partners and loved ones call the shots just this once.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Forces over which you have no control will upset your plans but the long-term forecast is still good. You may even be pleased that you were compelled to change direction. Everything happens for a reason.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Try not to fall out with a friend today because it may be a long time before you get the chance to make up again. What they do may be annoying but you will only make matters worse if you make a big deal of it.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Like it or not you will have to admit that no matter how much you might want to fit into a certain environment it was never meant to be. Today's Sun-Uranus link indicates it is time to bring to an end something.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Be true to your principles and do the right thing. Your reputation will surely head south if you cut corners or try to get round the rules. There is much more than money at stake.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
You'll find lots to occupy your mind today, if you enjoy a challenge. But if you're the type who gets upset when nothing goes right you might want to stay in bed a few hours longer!

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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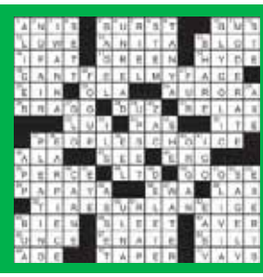

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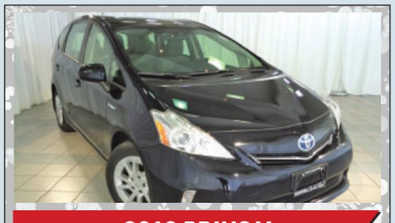

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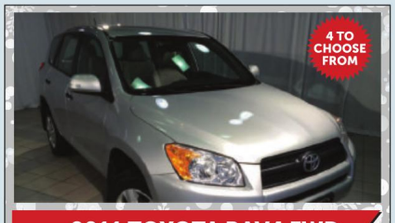

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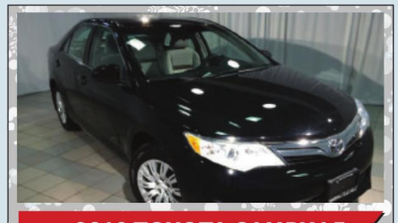

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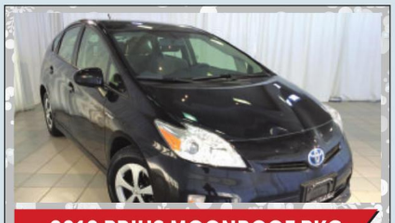

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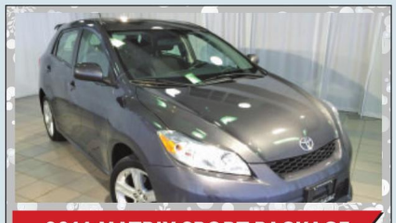

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